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THE STAR has a regular and permanent Family Circulation much more than the combined circulation of the other Washington dailies. As a News and Advertising Medium it has no competitor.

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A Fight for the Child.

Washington welcomes today delegates from all parts of the country to a national child-labor conference, which is to last three days. The purpose of the men and women engaged in this important campaign is to ameliorate the condition of the little workers in all the trades and occupations, and eventually to secure their release from wage-earning during the years when they should be acquiring an education. This is a noble effort, and deserving of the warmest support of all good citizens who look ahead to the welfare of the next generation.

The working of children in mills, factories, stores and other places is bad on several accounts. It is bad for their health, to begin with. They are confined closely, often in the most debilitating atmosphere, sometimes engaged in positively harmful occupations, at the age when they need exercise and fresh air and freedom from restraint. They are likely to be stunted in their growth, their systems weakened. They are robbed of their most precious heritage, that of a sound constitution. Great advances have already been made along the line of improving the conditions under which children are employed, through the efforts of the organizations in the states and cities whose representatives are here in session. When prohibitive laws are not yet possible, owing to the opposition of large interests, the ameliorative work is of vital consequence.

The children suffer morally when they are taken out of their natural line of life and set to work at tender years. They are often herded in with adults of low character, whose language and conduct are demoralizing influences upon the young minds. Many a character has been permanently wrecked by the evil associations formed in the early days of child labor. Smoking, drinking and other vices are readily acquired in such circumstances. This is an inherent evil. It is difficult to lessen it. The remedy for it lies in prohibition, to remove the child absolutely from these contaminating conditions and give it a chance for a wholesome career.

The little wage-earners suffer mentally when they are deprived of their schooling. They are thus handicapped trebly, their health menaced, their morals polluted, their minds stunted. They pay dearly in after years for the few dollars they earn as children. They enter manhood and womanhood permanently handicapped for the race. The preferments go to the brighter, better-educated young men and women. The boy or girl who is kept at school until after sixteen at the earliest and given a good English education is fitted to jump into any business or trade and make headway much faster than the dull-witted, feeble-bodied, weak-charactered one who has started out in the money-making effort at the age of ten, or even younger.

These are facts. They admit of no dispute. They cannot be set aside by considerations of expediency or a wrong conception of charity. To lessen the fight for better child-labor laws because of the fear that the poverty problem may become more acute is to temporize with both evils—that of child labor and that of poverty. Much of the present penury of the lower classes is due to the lack of education, and that in turn may be traced squarely to the employment of little folks at the years when they should have been learning.

It is to be hoped that much good will flow from this Washington conference, perhaps in the enactment of a model child-labor law for the District, and surely in the stimulation of interest in this important propaganda.

A Bossless Age? Or Spasm?

Are we in this country entering upon what the political historian will describe as the bossless age? Are we going to hold fast to what fortune has recently given us—the spirit to conduct our public affairs without the agencies of corrupt men at the top, whose sole aim is to line their own jackets with money filched from the people? Or are we simply having a spasm of indignation and virtue, to be followed by a relapse into the old conditions of indifference and sloth, when the bosses, who never sleep and are not easily discouraged, will shoulder forward again and resume charge in the old way and for the old purposes?

However this may be, there is no doubt of the spirit now abroad. It is anti-boss on every hand, and with an emphasis that leaves nothing to be desired. No man in office, or seeking office, fails to deliver himself on the subject in good, round terms. Every fellow considers that he advances himself in the public estimation by announcing that he wears no man's collar, and could not be induced to put one on. It is the day of independence and self-respect, and there is wide approval of the manifestation of those qualities.

As bossism reached its greatest luxuriance in New York, the repudiation of it is the most emphatic and pronounced there. Both sides are voicing the new day and their purposes with regard to it. Men put forward by Murphy and McCarren on the city ticket in the recent contest, and elected, or counted in, as the case may be, are now openly proclaiming a disposition to be their own men in office. They pledge all to the state, and nothing to the boss. "Charley" and "Pat," for the first time in their lives, are finding themselves out of the calculations of those they have raised to power.

On the republican side we hear deliverances of like tenor, and apparently of as great earnestness. Mr. Parsons, who is to be chairman of the New York county committee, objects to being considered either a Platt or an Odell man, and declares that he will know only the organization's interests, without regard to persons or factions. Candidates for the speakership of the state assembly are announcing themselves in a new and healthy tone, and asking to be considered on their personal character and standing.

The general condition of affairs is wholesome and inspiring. But will it last?

The insurance investigation continues to make people famous against their wills.

Developing Foreign Trade.

Senator Overman of North Carolina is of those who think that we need more markets, and that we shall not find them unless we seek them and inform ourselves as to the general foreign trade. For this purpose he proposes the appointment of a commission of five members, with authority to employ experts, whose duty it shall be to investigate the whole question of the world's commerce, with the view of ascertaining how much more of it than we now enjoy could be ours by the making of a concentrated and intelligent effort. He would have the commission sit three years, and would limit the expense of their labors to half a million dollars.

In some observations on the subject Mr. Overman says:

"It is generally recognized that there is a strong need of such a commission because of the poor showing made by our manufactured exports of raw material. The cotton products of the south are increasing every year. The south exports more than 7,000,000 bales of raw cotton, which are manufactured into cotton goods in England and sent back to South America, where $52,000,000 worth were sold to Argentine alone last year. Why should we not get that trade instead of England? This commission is intended to help find that market."

This one item, bearing upon this very important subject, is vastly suggestive. As the North Carolina senator inquires, why should we not sell to Argentine this annual bill of goods instead of selling the raw material to England, to be put into fabrics there for our South American neighbor? And there are other items. There are a hundred others, showing how important it is that we bestir ourselves if we may hope to take the place to which we are entitled in this era of the world's strenuousness and rapid progress. The spindles that now are turning, both in the south and in New England, are turning to profit, and if our alertness can be made to keep pace with our opportunities we should at no very distant day be manufacturing nearly all, if not the whole, of the growth of our cotton fields.

The best advances we can possibly make to our neighbors to the south are those of trade relations. That is the solution of any difficulty that may now exist between them and us. The Monroe doctrine probably does not give them the uneasiness which, in the gossip of the press, is now and then described. They are well advised as to our position on that point, but are not so well advised as to our ability to fit them out with the finished products they need from abroad.

Enforcing Bad Laws.

One of Mr. Roosevelt's firmest convictions, to judge from his past performances, especially as police commissioner of New York, is that all laws should be enforced until repealed, and that a law that has been allowed to die through neglect is a menace to the public good. While he served at the head of the metropolitan police department he resurrected several such statutes, breathed life into them and put them into effect, to the consternation of portions of the community. He was often quoted as saying that there was but one safe way to repeal a law, and that was by legislative enactment.

Were it not for the frequent news paragraphs in the local papers relative to certain court proceedings it might be suspected that the President thinks that the District smoke law is moribund and in need of enforcement, perhaps to the end of securing its amendment. His recommendations for much more severe penalties, if adopted by Congress, would certainly galvanize the statute into a most amazing life, but its active application would cause the death of all local business.

The present law is far from dead. It is not even dying. It is in good health, indeed, so far as its application is concerned. That able sanitarian, the health officer, has saved it from an ignominious end by interpreting it arbitrarily. If it stood in attempted practice, as its letter indicates, forbidding the slightest emission of dense black or gray smoke, with any sort of inspection corps to put it into effect, it would, with the penalties running as at present, render the conduct of business in Washington virtually impossible. And with the one-minute grace granted by the health officer, it is a burdensome, inequitable, unevenly applied, impractical statute.

The adoption of the President's recommendations, without amendment, would cause such a serious state of affairs at the capital that the radical amendment of the law would be imperatively demanded in the interest of the public welfare. Of the two evils, continued partial and inequitable enforcement of the law as it is now construed by the health officer, and the application of the harsh penalties suggested by the President on either a one-minute or a no-emission basis, the latter would be really preferable. For then relief would surely come, probably in the form of a sensible adjustment of the prohibition to the requirements of business, coupled with such penalties as might be deemed wise to give the statute full and just bearing upon all offenders.

There is, indeed, no objection on the part of the progressive, conscientious citizens of Washington to the adoption of the President's proposed penalties for smoke-emission, provided the law is so framed that it becomes possible to obey it.

There is no doubt that some of Uncle Sam's representatives in the neighborhood of the equator feel that the pay-roll should be so revised as to permit a greater allowance for ice water and malaria medicine.

When Senator Tillman finds things to approve in the President's message there does not seem to be much use in anybody's continuing to hold out. Might as well make the popularity vote unanimous.

It will be no great hardship to some of the corporations to be prohibited from contributing to campaign funds. They were not very enthusiastic in the first place.

Popular interest in the bicycle has disappeared, but New York can still get crowds to witness its use as a test of the utmost possibilities of human endurance.

A legislative fight over the Panama canal was long ago regarded as down on the list of things inevitable. It may as well come early.

The Russian citizen's method of attacking graft is as ineffectual as it is crude and sanguinary.

A number of the bills now being introduced in Congress are good old friends.

David B. Hill's Valedictory.

David B. Hill is quoted as follows:

"I am out of all active participation in politics, and shall never again get within the magic circle of political influence. I shall never attend another convention—district, state or national. If I can aid my party by making a speech or two in a campaign I may do so, but I shall never again do more than this."

In some comment on the deliverance appears this paragraph:

"This declaration from Mr. Hill is generally regarded as being sincere, but there are those who believe that when the delegates gather at the next state convention, whether it is held in Albany or some other city, they will instinctively turn to the 'Sage of Wolfert's Roost' for counsel, and that no important nomination will be made without consulting him."

It is difficult to associate Mr. Hill with the role of leader emeritus of his party at home. He is a veteran only in point of length of service, and still retains the force and fire and shrewdness which characterized his fighting days. He was born with the scrapping instinct, has developed and indulged it all his manhood years, and at sixty-five, with vigor unimpaired and some natural scores to settle, he does not belong on the shelf. Rather is his proper place still on the firing line, directing the forces and keeping the other side on the jump.

It is true, however, that this man, who has done so much to warn his party against trouble and fought so hard in the effort to rescue it after it had got into trouble, has had but a meager reward for all his pains. National leadership has been denied him, and even his local leadership was often disputed while it lasted. Traduced by the Cleveland people and harried by the Croker people, he was kept between hawk and buzzard for years, until at last his patience gave out and he retired in undisguised disgust. Still, with some years of good fight in him, he is not going to enjoy the future he has mapped out for himself. When the bugle sounds and the hosts march past, the old war horse will find it difficult to stay inside the fence.

Mr. Hill, unlike his great preceptor, has trained no youngsters for the public service. Mr. Tilden kept a sort of school, and Mr. Hill was his brightest, as he was his favorite pupil. Lamont, and a great many others, who afterwards figured in New York politics, learned their first, and many of their most important, lessons at the feet of the sage of Grammercy Park. But with Mr. Hill the old school disappears, and the New York democracy passes into new hands, whose methods have yet to be proved in the fires of experience.

Now that motor cars are to be placed under the supervision of the interstate commerce commission the man who wants to be safe may have to take along a lawyer as well as a chauffeur.

It seems odd to suggest a salary of $3,500 a year for the superintendent of a national bureau of life insurance when $100,000 is an ordinary salary for an office in one of the companies.

It is most unfortunate that the careers of some Russian officials should seem to sanction assassination or any brute violence as a means of vengeance.

It is not quite clear whether the discontinuance of passes by railways is to be regarded as a threat to legislators or a promise to the general public.

The army cooking school seems to indorse the wisdom of the epicures who declare that biscuit may be more deadly than bullets.

SHOOTING STARS.

Mild Sarcasm.

"I suppose you have some original ideas that you would like to offer in Congress?"

"No," answered the new member, "I have been observing closely and I perceive that the man who seeks to be original in this august assemblage immediately stamps himself a novice."

Of Equal Importance.

"Which do you think we had better make," said one Russian official, "threats or promises?"

"Whichever you choose," answered the other. "The people are paying just as much attention to one as to the other."

A Serious Disagreement.

Oh, dove of peace, your wings uplift,
And show us by your kind devices
A reconciliation swift
'Twixt Christmas pocketbooks and prices.

"Once in a while," said Uncle Eben, "you'll hear a man sayin' he regrets his past, when de fact is dat he's afraid of his future."

Endurance.

"Are you capable of enduring toil, self-sacrifice and personal discomfort in your determination to accomplish something you have set out to do?" inquired the man who gives advice.

"Yes," answered the youth, "I can conscientiously say I am. I once colored a meerschaum pipe."

The Dawn of Gentleness.

When foot ball is at last reformed
By national decree,
Let us not rest, but still toil on
Toward things that ought to be.
Let's regulate the bargain throngs
That madly surge and press
And lure the temper feminine
To anger and distress.

Let's regulate the crowds that climb
On the suburban car
And push their elbows in your eyes
And leave full many a scar
With their umbrellas used for spears
As the redoubt is stormed.
There may be hope for e'en these things
If foot ball is reformed.

Farmers Becoming Business Men.

From the Louisville Courier-Journal.

Viewed from all sides, farming is a great business. And it is as a real, live, substantial and serious business that the farmers should regard and conduct their affairs. Fortunately, system is rapidly revolutionizing the business. In the golden northwest the successful farmers are managing their estates like great manufacturing plants. There are no leaks, no slipshod methods. They are piling up magnificent crops and are making fortunes. Down our way, through Kentucky and the south, too, the farmers are beginning to look upon their occupation as a sure-enough business and not as a speculative pastime.

Oyama and Togo.

From the New York Tribune.

Home from his wars, the veteran Marshal Oyama is fittingly received with all the public honors grateful Japan can bestow. These are comparable only with those given a little time ago to Admiral Togo, the voice of the island empire saying to the latter:

"Mighty Seaman, this is he
Was great by land as thou by sea."

Higher praise could not be given to either, and, unlike their illustrious prototypes, they both receive it in their lives, and not "to the roll of muffled drums."

Dregs of Misrule.

From the Philadelphia Ledger.

The horrible state of the Schuylkill water, since the autumn rains washed down new clouds of culm into the dirty stream, excites renewed impatience and may well excite renewed indignation at the dishonest maladministration that has kept a supply of filtered water still an unrealized dream.

Cigarettes and Beer.

From the New York Mail.

A Wilkesbarre judge has decided that cigarettes are worse than beer. Some cigarettes than some beer, your honor. Objection sustained.

Cannon.

From the Springfield Republican.

"Economy" is said to be the watchword of the coming Congress. But who will watch the watchword and keep it in sight?

The Serpent in Eden Again.

From the Pittsburg Gazette.

Mark Twain has recently revived both Adam and Eve for literary purposes, but has not yet threatened to raise Cain.

Those Good Old Days.

From the Princeton Clarion-News.

With a bumper corn crop safe, and prices of farm products ruling strong, there is no longer any need to revert to the "good old times." The average farmer considers the present times good enough for him. The man with a bad liver, is, of course, not average.

The Longest.

From the New York World.

President Roosevelt celebrates the inauguration of economy in the government printing office by writing the longest presidential message on record.

Automobiling.

From the Birmingham Age-Herald.

Toot! Toot!
Scoot! Scoot!
Dead!